

HERCULES is celebrable for his harde traualles; he dauntede the proude Centaures, half hors, half man; and he brafte the dyspoylling fro the cruel lyon, that is to seyn, he slowh the lyon & rafte him his skin. He smoot the briddes that brighten Arpyes with ceruin arwes. He ravisshed apples fro the waking dragoun, and his hand was the more hevy for the goldene metal. He drow Cerberus, the hound of helle, by his treble cheyne. He, overcomer, as it is seyed, hath put an unmeke lord foddre to his cruel hors; this is to seyn, that Hercules slowh Diomedes, & made his hors to fretten him. And he, Hercules, slowh Ydra the serpent, and brende the venom. And Achelous the flood, defouled in his forhed, dreyneth his shamefast visage in his strondes; this is to seyn, that Achelous coude transfigure himself into dyverse lynnesses; and, as

Dixerat, orationisque cursum.

thou seidest whylom, that the question of
the diuine puruiance is enlaced with many
other questions, I understonde wel and
prooeve it by the same thing. But I axe yit
that thou weneest that hap be any thing in
any weys; and, yif thou weneest that hap be
any thing, what is it? ¶ Channe quod she,
I haste me to yilden and assoilen to thee
the dette of my bihest, and to shewen and
open the wey, by which wey thou mayst
come ayein to thy contree. But albeist so
that the thinges which that thou axest be
right profitable to knowe, yit ben they di-
uerse somewhat fro the path of my purpos;
and it is to douten that thou ne be mak-
ed wery by misweyes, so that thou ne mayst
nat suffice to mesuren the right wey.

N E doute thee therof nothing, quod
I. for, for to knowen thilke thinges
togedere, in the whiche thinges I

he faught with Hercules, at the laste he
tornede him into a bole; and Hercules brake
of oon of his hornes, and he, for shame,
hidde him in his river. And he, Hercules,
caste adoun Antheus the gyaunt in the
strondes of Libie; and Cacus apayedde the
wrathtes of Evander; this is to seyn, that
Hercules slowe the monstre Cacus, and
apayed with that deeth the Cacus, and
Evander. And the bristled wrattthe of
with scomes the shuldres boor marked
whiche shuldres the heye cerle of hevene
sholde thriste. And the laste of his la-
bours was, that he sustened the hevene
upon his nekke unbowed; & he deservede
eftsones the hevene, to ben the prys of
his laste traivale.

GOTH now thanne, ye stronge men,
theras the heye wey of the grette
enasmpledeðth yow. Onyemen,
why nake ye youre bakkes? As who seyth:
O ye slowe and delicat men, why fle ye ad-
versitees, and ne figheten nat ayeins hem
by vertu, to winnen the mede of the he-
vene? For the erthe, overcomen, yeveth the
sterres; this is to seyn, that, whan that
erthely lust is overcomen, a man is made
worthy to the hevене.

delyte me greetly, that shal ben to me in
stede of reste; sin it is nat to douten of
the thinges folwinge, whan every syde of
thy disputacioun shal han be stedefast to
me by undoutous feith.

THANNE seyd she: That manere wol I don the; & bigan to speken right thus. Certes, quod she, yif any wight diffinishe hap in this manere, that is to seyn, that hap is bytydinge y-brought forth by foolish moevinge and by no knettinge of causes, I confeme that hap nis right naught in no wyse; and I deme aloutrely that hap nis, no dwelleth but a voice, as who seith, but an ydel word, withouten any significacioun of thing submitted to that vois, for what place might ben left, or dwellinge, to folye and to disordenauce, sin that God ledeth and constreineth alle thinges by ordre? for this sentence is verray & sooth, that Nothing ne hath his beinge of naught; to the whiche sentence none of those olde folk ne with seyde never; albeit so that they ne understoden ne meneden it naught by God, prince and beginner of werkinge, but they casten it as a manere foundement of subject material, that is to seyn, of the nature of alle resoun. And yif that any thing is woxen or comen of no causes, than shal it seme that thilke thing is comen or woxen

of naught; but yif this ne may nat ben
 don, thanne is it nat possible, that hap be
 any swich thing as I have diffinissed a
 litle heerefor. ¶ How shal it thanne be
 quod I. Nis ther thanne nothing that by
 right may be cleped either hap or elles
 aventure of fortune; or is ther aught,
 albeit so that it is hid fro the peple, to
 which these wordes ben covenable? ¶ Myn
 Aristotilis, quod he, in the booke of his
 phisikis, diffinisseth this thing by short
 reson, & neigh to the sothe. ¶ In which
 reson, quod I.

A mans oft, quod she, as men don any thing for grace of any other thing, and another thing than thilke thing that men entenden to don biydyeth by some causes, it is cleped Hap. Right as a man dalf the erthe by the cause of tilyng of the feeld, and founde ther a gobet or gold bidolven, thanne wenen folk that it is bifalle by fortunous biydyng. But, for sothe, it is nis nat of naught, for it hath his propre causes; of whiche causes the cours unforseyen & unwar semeth to han maked hap. For yif the tilyere of the feeld ne dolve hap in the erthe, and yif the hyder of the gold ne hadde hid the gold in thilke place, the gold ne hadde nat been founde. Thise ben thanne the causes of the abregginge of fortui hap, the which abregginge of fortui hap comth of causes encountinge and flowinge togidre to himself, and nat by the entencium of the deer. For neither by the hyder of the gold ne the delver of the feeld ne understoden nat that the gold sholde han ben founde; but, as I sayde, it bitidde and ran togidre that he dalf theras that other hadde hid the gold. Now may I thus diffinishe Hap. Hap is an unwar biydyng of causes assembled in thinges that ben don for som other thing. But thilke ordre, proceedinge by an uneschuale bindinge togidre, which that descendeth fro the welle of purviance that ordinneth alle thinges in hir places and in hir tymes, maketh that the causes rennen and assemble togidre.

Metre I.
Rupis Hchemenie scopulis, ubi versa se-
quentum.

TIGRIS & Eufrates resolven
and springen of so welle, in
the craggis of the roche of
the contree of Achemenie,
theras the fleinge bataille fic-
ceth hir dartes, retourned in
the brestes of hem that folwen hem. And
sonafter tho same riveres, Tigris & Eu-
frates, uninjoin & departen hir wateres.
And yif they comen togidres, and ben as-
sembled and cleped togidre into o cours,
thanne moten þilke thinges floten togi-

dere which that the water of the entre-
changinge flood bringeth. The shippes &
the stokes arraced with the flood moten
assemblen; & the wateres ymedled wrap-
peth or impleth many fortune hapnes or
maneres; the whiche wandringe hapnes,
natheles, thilke declyninge lownesse of
the erthe and the flowinge ordre of the
slydinge water governeth. Right so for-
tune, that semeth as that it fleteth with
slaked or ungoverned brydles, it suffereth
brydles, that is to seyn, to be governed,
and passeth by thilke lawe, that is to seyn,
by thilke diuine ordenaunce.

HIS understonde I wel, quod I, and I acorde wel that it is right as thou seyst. But Iaxe yif ther be any libertee of free wil in this ordre of causes that clyven thus togidere in hem self; or elles I wolde witen yif that the destinal cheyne constreyneth the movinges of the corages of men?

IS, quod she; ther is libertee of free wil. Ne ther ne was nevere no nature of resoun that it ne hadde libertee of free wil. For every thing that may naturally usen resoun, it hath doom by which it discerneth & demeth every thing; thanne knoweth it, by itself, thinges that ben to flee and thinges that ben to desiren. And thilke thing that any wight demeth to ben desired, that axeth or desireth he; & fleeth thilke thing that he groweth ben to flee. Wherefore in alle thinges that resoun is, in hem also is libertee of willinge and of nilling. But I ne ordeyne nat, as who seyth, Ingrauntat, that this libertee be evene lyk in alle thinges. forwhy in the sovereynes devynes substaunces, that is to seyn, in spirits, judgement is more cleer, and wyl nat ycorumped, and might redy to speden thinges that ben desired. But the soules of men moten nedes be more free whan they taken hem in the speculacioun or lookinge of the devyne thought, and lasse free whan they styden into the bodies; and yif lasse free whan they ben gadered togidre & comprehended in erthely membres. But the laste servage is whan that they ben yeven to vyces, & han yfalle from the possession of hir propre resoun. For after that they han cast away hir eyen fro the light of the sovereyn soothfastnesse to lowe thinges and derke, anon they derken by the cloude of ignorance & ben troubled by felonous talents; to the which tal-

Boethius de
Consolatione
Philosophie.
Book V.